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THE CANDIDATES ON THE ISSUES : #3 DEFENSE

Intelligence agencies

CARTER

Jimmy Carter in 1976 promised reforms in the intelligence agencies. As President, he did reorganize the agencies and placed curbs on covert activities, electronic counterespionage, and surveillance of American citizens and resident aliens.

Among positions taken by either the President or his director of Central Intelligence, Adm. Stansfield Turner, regarding still-pending legislation for an intelligence "charter" are: that the charter should give the intelligence community greater leeway, rather than less, to conduct its operations; that congressional oversight continue to be restricted to two committees; that "prior notification" to Congress on covert activities is "excessive intrusion" into a president's conduct of foreign affairs; that the president not be required to approve all covert operations personally; that the CIA be exempted from most requirements of the Freedom of Information Act; that the CIA not be barred from using the news media, the clergy, or academic institutions as "cover" for intelligence operations; and that anyone — not just present or former government employees — be subject to criminal penalties for disclosing the names of purported "covert agents."

REAGAN

The Republican platform states: "A Republican administration will seek to improve US intelligence capabilities for technical and clandestine collection, cogent analysis, coordinated counterintelligence, and covert action . . . , re-establish the President's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board, abolished by the Carter administration, as a permanent nonpartisan body of distinguished Americans to perform a constant audit of national intelligence research and performance . . . , undertake an urgent effort to rebuild the intelligence agencies . . . , support legislation to invoke criminal sanctions against anyone who discloses the identities of US intelligence officers abroad or who makes unauthorized disclosures of US intelligence sources and methods . . . , provide our government with the capability to help influence international events vital to our national security interests . . . , and "seek adequate safeguards to ensure that past abuses will not recur," while seeking "the repeal of ill-considered restrictions sponsored by Democrats, which have debilitated US intelligence capabilities while easing the intelligence collection and subversion efforts of our adversaries."